

## Global music of our surroundings since 1990

-- NILOY SARKAR, founding member of Dabanol

While writing this topic I've become some kind of nostalgic. Those days were really great. Being in middle class families me and my high school friends used to spend times into grabbing adventurous, horror fictions of Satyajit Ray, Sirshendu Mukherjee, Edgar Ellen Poe, alister maclean etc., playing cricket and football like hell. And yes, apart from this, listening to Rahul Debbarman, Kishore Kumar, Salil Chowdhury was an integral part via radio or tape recorders.

Back in 1985 to 1986, my maternal elder brothers, sisters and their friends used to listen BoneyM, Michael Jackson and some other alien named artistes beside Jagjit Singh, Talat Aziz, Gulam Ali etc.

My memory may be challenged. If I am not wrong, when we were at class nine, back in 1987 I and some of us saw Pre-Grammy show and Grammy night at Doordarshan. My goose bumps as I analyse those memories. All of my close friends used to admire progressive music of RD or Salilda. Likewise, we were totally blown by the attack of stunning tight music, thundering drums, roaring sound of guitars and scream like high pitch vocals. After about 5-6 years, we came to know that they were U2, Steve Winwood, Bruce Hornsby etc. legends.

Guys and gals, afterwards, our interest grew by tuning foreign radio stations like BBC, Voice of America, Radio Dochebele, Radio Shillong, Radio Srilanka etc. Limited was the scope of purchasing the audio tapes at that tender age. We saw grammy 88 and a year after amnesty international sent a music team to India consisting of Bruce Springsteen, U2, Sting, Tracy Chapman and Yousou n'Dour. We ate every second of their videos at Doordarshan. Gone through radio and realised Bruce Springsteen's anti American role towards war.

It was 1990 when we reached up class-XI the days when we managed some pocket money. We spent some and saved some. The audio cassette shops of agartala also managed to bring some pirated tapes from Shillong, Myanmar, Bangladesh. Yes, I brought one Bruce Springsteen album 'Tunnel of Love'. My friend Kushal, Angshuman and Joysekhar due to their love towards heavy crunchy guitar oriented music managed to get Iron Maiden, Motley Crue, Scorpions for each of them respectively. I can still recall our love for Stevie Wonder, Michael Jackson, Lionel Richie etc. sages.

Hand in hand, obviously through Doordarshan, we had gone through pop videos Indian acts like Sharon Prabhakar, Shamak Davar, 13 AD, Great Society, Usha Utthup etc. We had been waiting for Friday night show of 'The World This Week' hosted by Pranoy Roy wherein international entertainment section, chances occurred to see some western music videos or live shows.

In 1991, first Indian video aired by MTV. It was Rock Machine's (Now Indus Creed) 'Top of the Rock' and soon after Baba Saigol's 'Thanda Thanda Paani'. In 1993, first heavy metal video telecasted in MTV's headbanger's ball and it was Bangalore based Millennium's video 'Only be one'.

Not only radio or TV, we were familiar about news clippings of global music scene through some magazines like North East Sun, Jetset, Upbeat etc. So, moth-wise information on our icons was handy as far as their correspondent's collection.

In relation to the global scene, we were in touch with national pop rock acts like Shiva, Great Society, Agni, Rock Machine, Gary Lawyer etc. All of them were used to sing and compose in English. Lyrics were revolutionary and music was fused with Indian-Western classical. At that period, Rock Street Journal came out, solely for promoting local bands.

We got in touch with few guys of Math Chowmuhani and Arundhutinagar Mission Complex area who were also in love with such type of music.

But, as far as our own bangla language is concerned, exclusive compositions in Bengali with varied sound of drums, keyboard, guitar, bass and most importantly lyrics meant for youth emerged from Dhaka, Chittagong etc. urban areas of Bangladesh. Kolkata was not far behind, but bands of Bangladesh were way ahead in terms commercialisation of our native language.

Behold my dear readers, one of my aunties came at my house in 1993 and brought an album for me titled 'Bongabdo 1400' by a band called 'Feedback'. I just played it once in my Twin-one set, believe me, my eyes and ear halted for a while! On an emergent basis, I called Kushal and Angshuman to have a look at it. Like me, they were astonished also, hearing such groovy sound in Bengali language. Most probably, it was the first Bangla band album played at Agartala.

It was a history, we had become mad to bring more and more bangla pop rock albums through our relatives who stayed at Bangladesh. Now, police won't sue me for confessing the fact that we gave money to some smugglers for bringing bangla band cassettes and they did it.

In 1995, our thrust for band music made us learning guitars, drums etc. As there was no microscopic sign of internet then, we were compelled to learn guitar from hindi orchestra maestros of agartala. As soon as we learnt the basics we turned them into western kind of technique. Me, Kushal and Angshuman got in touch with GB Bazar's Tirthankar (now at Zedde, Mumbai) and Joynagar's Kaushik. We targeted Kushal's Fencing-house for rehearsal. Some other rock music fanatic namely Pappu Singh, Late Debal Deb, Joydeep Podder used to come at our rehearsal place to have the eye-to-eye glimpse of rock music. Beside practising Iron Maiden, Bon Jovi, Pink Floyd, Jimi Hendrix we tried bangla band classics of Miles, Feedback, Warfaze etc. Yes, we gave the name of our venture – our band name (probably first band of Tripura) was **Warwolves**. In the December of 1996 we did our first concert at the Town Hall of Agartala and it was a super duper hit as some north eastern students of Tripura Engineering College and some other city dwellers wonderingly asked about our identification as they took us some guys of Kolkata! Our self composition 'Nishachar' has been regarded as first bangla rock song of Tripura.

Times goes on, life goes on. Angshuman and Tirthankar flew away for outer states for professional career. I found HIRAK DAS, HIRAK SARKAR, KISHALAYA DEBBARMA and SOUMEN BHATTACHARJEE which took shape of '**Obsidian**' in the year 2000. It lasted for two or three years. In the year 2004, me(Niloy), Kushal, HIRAK SARKAR, KISHALAY and KAUSHIK formed '**Dabanol**' which musically, professionally changed the music scene of Agartala as well as in the state also. Dabanol gave challenge to

hindi film music claded scene of Agartala and managed to distinguish it's identity as a true bangla rock band of Tripura.

Till 2012 we did live shows at every corner of the state, major colleges, University and prominent stages of Agartala. It is the most famous band of Tripura which managed it's identity in Kolkata, Delhi, Orissa, Bangalore, Pune even in Bangladesh also. We have performed at Delhi pop rock fest 2004, Kohima in 2009, Bhubaneswar in 2010 and stunned everyone by doing rock music in Bengali.

Currently we are working on self compositions. Lyrics are based upon social issues, anti war and abstract human psychology. Driven by deep love towards our Indian culture, we are fusing our own root folk tune with rock music.

The scene of alternative music which was created by us, constantly developing itself with other numerous bands of our state. We take this progress as a journey towards the future blood of Tripura.